

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1 and 10 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A non-standard cheese product comprising about 30 to about 80 percent cheese substitute, about 20 to about 50 percent natural cheese, and about 5 to about 50 acidified dairy slurry, wherein the non-standard cheese product is soft and easily blendable with conventional food ingredients in a food processing and manufacturing line and wherein the natural cheese is cream cheese or Neufchatel cheese.

2. (original) The non-standard cheese product as defined in claim 1, and wherein the non-standard cheese product has a texture of about 1000 to about 5000g at about 40°F.

3. (original) The non-standard cheese product as defined in claim 2, wherein the natural cheese is cream cheese.

4. (original) The non-standard cheese product as defined in claim 2, wherein the natural cheese is Neufchatel cheese.

5. (original) The non-standard cheese product as defined in claim 3, wherein the acidified dairy slurry is prepared by cooking a mixture comprising a dairy protein, salt, gum, at least one edible acid, and water at a temperature of about 165 to about 195°F for about 8 to about 12 minutes.

6. (original) The non-standard cheese product as defined in claim 4, wherein the acidified dairy slurry is prepared by cooking a mixture comprising a dairy protein, salt, gum, at least one edible acid, and water at a temperature of about 165 to about 195°F for about 8 to about 12 minutes.

7. (original) The non-standard cheese product as defined in claim 2, wherein the acidified dairy slurry is homogenized.

8. (original) The non-standard cheese product as defined in claim 5, wherein the acidified dairy slurry is homogenized after cooking.

9. (original) The non-standard cheese product as defined in claim 6, wherein the acidified dairy slurry is homogenized after cooking.

10. (currently amended) A method for preparing a non-standard cheese product, said method comprising (1) cooking a first mixture comprising a dairy protein, salt, gum, at least one edible acid, and water to a temperature of about 165 to about 195°F to form an acidified dairy slurry, (2) forming a second mixture comprising about 30 to about 80 percent cheese analog or cream cheese substitute, about 20 to 50 about percent natural cheese, and about 5 to about 50 acidified dairy slurry, and (3) blending the second mixture for a time sufficient to form the non-standard cheese product, wherein the non-standard cheese product is soft and easily blendable with conventional food ingredients in a food processing and manufacturing line and wherein the natural cheese is cream cheese or Neufchatel cheese.

11. (original) The method as defined din claim 10, wherein the non-standard cheese product is homogenized.

12. (original) The method as defined in claim 10, wherein the non-standard cheese product has a texture of about 1000 to about 5000g at about 40°F.

13. (original) The method as defined in claim 12, wherein the natural cheese is cream cheese.

14. (original) The method as defined in claim 12, wherein the natural cheese is Neufchatel.

15. (original) The method as defined in claim 13, wherein the first mixture comprises about 5 to about 95 percent of a dairy protein source containing the dairy protein, about 0.5 to about 2.5 percent of the salt, about 0.2 to about 0.7 percent of the gum, about 0.1 to about 1.1 percent of the at least one edible acid, and a total water content of about 45 to about 85 percent.

16. (original) The method as defined in claim 14, wherein the first mixture comprises about 5 to about 95 percent of a dairy protein source containing the dairy protein, about 0.5 to about 2.5 percent of the salt, about 0.2 to about 0.7 percent of the gum, about 0.1 to about 1.1 percent of the at least one edible acid, and a total water content of about 45 to about 85 percent.

17. (original) The method as defined in claim 15, wherein the first mixture comprises about 15 to about 85 percent of the dairy protein source containing the dairy protein, about 0.95 to about 1.45 percent of the salt, about 0.2 to about 0.6 percent of the gum, about 0.3 to about 0.75 percent of the at least one edible acid, and total water content of about 45 to about 65 percent.

18. (original) The method as defined in claim 15, wherein the first mixture comprises about 15 to about 85 percent of the dairy protein source containing the dairy protein, about 0.95 to about 1.45 percent of the salt, about 0.2 to about 0.6 percent of the gum, about 0.3 to about 0.75 percent of the at least one edible acid, and total water content of about 45 to about 65 percent.

19. (original) The method as defined in claim 17, wherein the second mixture comprises about 45 to about 65 percent cheese analog or cream cheese substitute,

about 25 to 35 about percent natural cheese, and about 10 to about 25 acidified dairy slurry.

20. (original) The method as defined in claim 18, wherein the second mixture comprises about 45 to about 65 percent cheese analog or cream cheese substitute, about 25 to 35 about percent natural cheese, and about 10 to about 25 acidified dairy slurry.